

HINTS  
CONCERNING  
GREEN - WOOD ;

ITS  
Monuments and Improvements.

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# H I N T S

## CONCERNING

### GREEN - WOOD, & c.



It is ten years since Green-wood was opened for purposes of interment. At that time a few of the principal avenues had been made, and this was all. The beauties and capabilities of the place were perceptible at a glance. A little of its future might, perhaps, be anticipated; yet few, it is believed, even dreamed of the results which we now behold.

Within the period named, the cemetery has doubled in extent: nearly seven thousand lots have been disposed of: more than twenty-five thousand interments have been made. A multitude of beautiful inclosures, and several hundred tombs and monuments, involving a vast aggregate expense, may now be seen there — pleasing memorials, in the main, of

taste and wealth — or, certainly, of grief and pious love.

Much as has been done towards the adornment of these grounds by individual owners, we contemplate with a deeper interest those improvements which have been made by the Institution itself. A judicious system was early adopted, and has been steadily carried out, by the government of the cemetery. To this, chiefly, does it owe its acknowledged superiority over all similar institutions.

Of this system, one most important feature is the fact, that the grounds are completely graded before they are sold, and that no alteration of the surface, injurious to the neighboring lots, or to the general aspect, is, in any case, permitted. By this means every natural grace has been retained, and even new charms have been added to the landscape. Broad and durable roads have been made, resting upon thick, absorbent beds of cobble-stone, and with paved gutters on all the slopes. Hard, clean footpaths, often shaded, invite

the meditative and the sad — and give access to every occupied spot. Manuring, and tilling, and seeding,—the constant use of the rake and roller, the scythe and the weeding-hook, have converted a large portion of the surface into a beautiful green sward. Neatness, order, care — the results of a constant and efficient supervision, are every where perceived; and hence, these grounds present a scene of rural beauty rarely surpassed, even by princely lawns.

How desirable it is that this character should be preserved! If there be any *one* paramount consideration that would influence me in the selection of a cemetery, it would be the question of such probability. Present eligibility may exist — but is it likely to last? Will decency and decorum continue to reign? Can I feel a comfortable and reasonable assurance, that neatness and order, and a kindly protecting care, will keep these places as they now are?

That there is danger on this head, particularly in large cemeteries, experience already

shows. In more than one may even now be seen the squalidness of neglect. The system thus far pursued in Green-wood — its ample pecuniary means, already secured, or likely to accrue — the provision made in its charter for the permanent care and adornment of the grounds, together with the disinterested and enduring nature of the Institution, as made sure with the utmost stability of law, give us good reason to hope that here, at least, the occasion for such reproach will not come. While the present management continues, we feel safe. When, at length, it shall pass into other hands, may they prove no less faithful — no less skillful!

But it should be remembered, that the good looks and the high reputation of Green-wood depend not for continuance upon its officers *alone*. The owners of lots — those who plant, and those who build upon this ground — by the exercise of a good, or of a mistaken taste — by the display of intelligence, or of ignorance — may greatly modify the character of the

place. A cursory inspection of the inclosures and monuments in Green-wood will furnish numerous illustrations of this remark, in both kinds. The directors have, indeed, wisely reserved to themselves a discretionary power over the improvements or changes which may be made in the lots sold. Any serious annoyance to others — any great enormity in matters of taste and propriety will, doubtless, be prevented or removed under this authority. Beyond this, it is an affair of difficulty and delicacy to interfere. To advise, or to dissuade, is about all that can be done in ordinary cases. The subject is important, and must commend itself to all who feel an interest in Green-wood.

While there are some, whose own good sense and taste are a sufficient guide in matters of this sort, it is certain that far the greater number rely, mainly, on opinions (not always judicious) derived from others. Many are content with blindly copying some fanciful or quaint conceit, which has caught their eye — tolerable, perhaps, while it stood alone, but

odious when oft repeated. Others visit the stone-cutter's yard, look at his ready-made specimens, and listen to advice which not even charity herself can suppose to be *always* disinterested. Or anxious, perhaps, to have something very expressive and original, they concoct, with his aid, some *outré* design, and then perpetrate in marble the long-enduring folly.

It is not very strange that there are numerous violations of good taste in the adornments of our burial grounds. In the great majority of cases, attention is first turned to this subject when a lot is purchased, or when the death of some friend calls for a memorial. Upon a point which has received no previous consideration, the idea first presented, however crude, will probably be accepted. It is with the hope of preventing, at least, in some instances, action so inconsiderate, that the following suggestions are offered. They claim no weight but such as they may derive from appeals to a simple taste, and to common sense.



For greater convenience in reading and reference, they will be given under separate heads.

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### Inclosures.

IN grounds secured and guarded like those of Green-wood, interior fences are not absolutely necessary. Still they furnish a seeming protection, and, at least, serve to define and preserve the limits of the lots. Accordingly, most purchasers choose to place something of the kind around their little domains. Some are content with a live hedge. Others have posts connected by chains or by bars. The most common fence is of iron-pale fashion, with posts of the same material, or of stone. There are a few marble fences, in imitation of the wooden rail.

The *quickset* hedge has the charm of simplicity and of nature, and when formed of ever-greens, its beauty is perennial. On ac-

count of the room which it occupies, it is best fitted for a large lot. It has the advantage of needing no paint. But it should be remembered that the injuries to which hedges are subject, are not easily repaired; and that, if not constantly and closely pruned, they soon become an obtruding and unsightly mass of bushes.

To the *chain* fence, there is one decided objection. The chain furnishes a tolerable seat and a favorite swing. The consequence is that the posts are soon drawn out of place.

For small rectangular plots, posts of iron or stone, connected by one or two plain *bars*, form a simple and not expensive inclosure. There are two or three large circles in Green-wood, which are surrounded by low posts, held together by massive bars. There are probably no fences there which were more expensive. Their beauty I should estimate in the inverse ratio of their cost.

The *marble imitation* of the wooden rail-fence, being neither strong nor handsome, has

nothing to recommend it but its expensiveness. There is, as yet, no instance in Green-wood of the stone parapet. In some situations, a low battlemented wall of sand-stone would have, it is believed, a fine effect. The first cost would be considerable, but it would take care of itself ever after.

Of the *iron* fences, there is an endless diversity. It is perhaps to be regretted, though, I suppose, unavoidable, that the more graceful and artistic wrought iron is fast being supplanted by the rigid but cheaper castings. As to the style, you must choose for yourself. The varieties are as numerous as the patterns of calico on a shopman's counter. Look at these varied specimens of Vulcanian ingenuity. Compare the more elaborate and complicate forms with those of a simpler character. If your eye does not return from all those figures, and coils, and quirks, and symbolic devices, to rest, with sensible relief, on the simplicity of straight lines and unencumbered curves,—I can only say, it differs from mine.

A word now in regard to posts. There seems to be a strange rage for these articles. In some parts the ground is covered with them. So numerous are they, and so glaring in their prominence, that they seem to leave little room for anything else. Particularly objectionable are those white marble or granite abominations, which stick up so thickly in certain places. As a general thing, for an iron paling, a few well-proportioned posts of the same material, answer every purpose, and look incomparably better than stone. By the gateway of a large inclosure, or round some massive monument, posts of stone, properly adapted in size and form, have an excellent effect. But in most cases, they only belittle the lot and the structure which they guard, and injure the general appearance.

## Trees—Shrubbery—Flowers.

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THE fear has already been expressed, that Green-wood is in danger of suffering serious injury from a universal tree-planting. The Cemetery owes no small share of its unrivalled beauty to its admirable alternation of woodland and glade. The opening, and the thicket, are made doubly charming by mutual reflection and contrast. But as things are now going on, this charm will soon be gone. Each lot-owner on the open spaces thinks he must line his small plat with trees. These, so rapid is their growth, will soon leave little else in sight. In Mount Auburn, such a change has already taken place, and greatly to its disadvantage.

Is there no remedy? Yes. Let those who are so fond of shade, seek it where it already exists—beneath noble trees of nature's own sowing—and thus leave the green lawn to others who love the sun and sky. Or, if the

luxury of planting must be indulged, let the trees selected be those of a dwarfish type, and of attenuated foliage; and, let even these be 'few and far between.' After all, our fears are stronger than our hopes. The change, unless arrested by some general regulation, will go on, — and these avenues, now so open and bright, will, in a few years hence, wind darkling along through dense groves of spruce, and pine, and larch.

The custom of rearing flowering shrubs and plants is not exposed to the objection just raised. It is one, indeed, which, with most persons, commends itself favorably to the sensibilities and the taste. Even allowing that often it is a piece of affectation, or of imitative display — still, in many cases, it doubtless helps to soothe the first anguish of bereavement. We would not forbid the pious care. Let nature bloom above the still precious dust, and shed upon it her fragrant offerings. But surely there should be a limitation here. I like to see the rose bending over the humble mound,

or lovingly twining about the lettered stone. A few flowers, appropriate in their hues and associations, scattered here and there in the grass, and growing, as it were, spontaneously, are very becoming. Not so these artificial beds, these gravelled walks, these trim parterres, filled but too often with flaunting exotics.

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### Monuments and Memorials.

Six years ago, I presented in GREENWOOD ILLUSTRATED, some general considerations on monuments. I have reason to think that they have been approved by the judicious. The managers of the institution have given them their sanction, by according to them a place in their annual pamphlet. Having seen in the interim no occasion to change those opinions, but, on the contrary, much that confirms them, I shall here give, in brief, the substance of the article, with some additional suggestions.

The erection of monuments for the dead is a custom sanctioned by all experience, and not less rational than natural. In cities and crowded churchyards, it has from necessity been often laid aside, but it revives in the rural cemetery. Here, as reason and nature dictate, the dead are, for the most part, consigned singly to the bosom of our mother earth. Each separate mound may have its own memorial. Such grounds, from their general attractiveness, as well as their numerous objects of individual interest, become places of resort. Their monuments draw attention and scrutiny. The flat, low-lying, undecipherable slab — the thin, unbraced, and too often leaning headstone; and the more ambitious, but transitory pile of wretched masonry, which have so long deformed our burial-places, now yield, or should yield, to a more enlightened taste, to more massive, and better proportioned, and far more durable erections.

In matters of this sort, no one would wish to see unvarying uniformity. There may be,



and there ought to be, an endless variety. But let taste, if possible, reign throughout. Assuredly there is such a principle, and its general laws are fixed and known.

Of all monuments, a *slab*, laid upon the ground, is the most simple and least costly. But these are its only merits. To read the inscription, one must stand over it. The letters, even when deeply cut, are soon filled with lichens and dirt, and become illegible. The stone itself is liable to be buried in the grass, if not in the earth. Finally, it looks low and mean.

When this same horizontal tablet is put on legs, and raised a little from the ground, it becomes more dignified. I cannot, however, recommend the form. The foundation is seldom of uniform firmness, and the slab, consequently, soon loses its level. The lettering also, as in the case above, quickly fills up.

The *vertical headstone* also combines simplicity and economy. To keep it vertical, it must have a substantial base. It allows con-

siderable variety in form, and is susceptible, to a certain extent, of becoming ornament. But this limit is often overstepped. The money expended in covering such monuments with coarsely sculptured wreaths and roses, or with caricatures of infants and angels, would often tell to far better account, if employed in augmenting the size and massiveness of the stone. By giving it height, and thickness, and artistic form, the headstone may be made a graceful and even imposing structure.

During the last five and twenty years, our monumental architects have seemed to be strangely enamored of *pyramidic* forms. The *obelisk* is seen every where. It is not denied that a monument of this figure, when large and monolithic, has a certain degree of dignity. But even the original Egyptian model, (as those who have seen can testify,) is indebted for its impressiveness mostly to its antiquity and its associations. The tall and costly pile on Bunker Hill, is far from being what it ought to have been, a striking feature in the

landscape. Such a structure can boast no particular elegance of form, or skill of art. It is simply a towering, tapering heap of stone. In shape, in height, in effect, it differs not essentially from the ambitious chimney, that soars by its side. We regret the attempted repetition of this experiment at Washington. A hundred thousand dollars have already been sunk in rearing a gigantic frustum — an unmeaning mass of marble and mortar. For less than this monument will cost, should it ever be completed, (an event far from probable,) we might have a colossal, equestrian statue of Washington in bronze, surrounded by the forms of his fellow warriors and statesmen, with relievo representations of Revolutionary scenes, not inferior to that remarkable group in the Unter den Linden, of which Berlin and Prussia are so justly proud. In *such* a work, what gratification for the eye! What instruction and excitement for the mind and heart! What encouragement, and what renown for native, deserving, struggling art!

If there be so little to commend in the larger and better specimens of the obelisk, we cannot say much of the miniature imitations. Their narrow surfaces leave but scant room for inscriptions. Their geometric form scarcely allows variety. The sameness, where they are numerous, becomes extremely tiresome. Thus far, Green-wood has suffered less in this respect than some other cemeteries.

I have said that this class is not susceptible of variety. This refers to the genuine, antique obelisk, in which the angular measures, and relative proportions of base and pyramid, are nearly uniform. Departures from these are often seen in our grave-yards and stone-yards; but they are, for the most part, varieties of ugliness. Those who select the obelisk, should be particular as to its shape, and should place it, if possible, where it will contrast advantageously with other forms.

## The Sarcophagus.

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When copied from the best examples of the ancients, the sarcophagus is not displeasing. For proper effect it requires a greater elevation than is generally given to it.

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## The Column.

The *round column*, as we generally see it in our burying-grounds, is quite too small for impressive effect. It looks slender; it lacks dignity; it does not fill the eye.

There are in Green-wood several *square* and *polygonal pillars*, rising from high and large bases, and crowned sometimes with fantastic caps. These monuments, some of which are incumbered with costly ornaments, make considerable show. We think the taste which they gratify may well be questioned.

The *altar-form* monument, with a coped top, occurs repeatedly in these grounds. These vary much in size, and style of ornament. Some of them are large and elegant, and have an interior space for temporary interment. *Schenck*, on Bayside Avenue, and the *Cornell tomb*, on Ocean Hill, are examples of this class.

There is a form of monument, which may be called, for convenience, the *coped oblong*. A specimen may be seen over the grave of William Bell, in the Pierrepont inclosure, Lawn-girt Hill. The Livingston memorial, near the Tour and Central Avenue, is of the same genus, though on a much larger scale. This monument admits of considerable diversity in form. It is well adapted to inscriptions. It is not costly, unless it be large. It is modest, simple, and solid.

There is another, and very important class of monuments, for which we have no recognized, distinctive name. It is a *short pillar*. It is round, or square, or hexagonal. The sides are vertical, or slightly inclined, or some-

what curved. It is coped, and surmounted generally by an urn. That this monument is susceptible of many modifications in size, and shape, and ornament; that it is adapted to a frugal, or to a liberal expenditure; that whether it be small and simple, or large and dignified and decorated, it may alike possess true beauty, is shown, I think, by numerous specimens in Green-wood. Look at Benedict, on Ocean Bluff; Harper, on Butternut Hill; Smith, near Lawn-girt Hill; and at Leonard, Buchanan, Norris, Kingsland, Cleaveland, and Atwater, on Ocean Hill.

Fault has been found with some of these. "They were too bulky—clumsy, in short." We half thought so too. Attempts were made to avoid this error. Pillars of the same general style, but far more slender, showed themselves on the ground. Hardly had we looked at the whittled, tapered imitations, ere we fled back in haste to the substantial and respectable originals.

## Tombs.

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We have no partiality for the *charnel house*, whether below or above ground. The *grave* seems decidedly preferable. Let the dead be *interred*. Let earth conceal them from our sight, and kindly, gradually, resolve them to herself. Against future desecration, all would secure

"The mould  
Once hallowed by the Almighty's breath."

In what other way can we do this so effectually? The vault may, indeed, be fast, and strong, and durable. But what will protect its contents, when, in the inevitable course of events, it shall pass into the possession of those who will care nothing for the builder or his kindred?

But the necessities and habits of city burial have made the tomb seem natural and familiar to many. An aristocratic feeling may possibly



influence some, who would fain be select in their associations, even under ground. In others, doubtless, the preference springs from a tenderer and better motive. Not a few prefer the tomb, and will have it.

The steep slopes of Green-wood are favorable to such structures, and show many examples of neat and excellent architecture. The features appropriate to the *tomb-façade*, are an appearance of perfect security and strength—symmetrical proportions—and that air of quiet solemnity which becomes the entrance to a house of the dead. The following may be referred to as good exemplifications: Cairns, Unkart and Kobbe, Meade, Shiff, Taggart, Bunting, Fletcher, Morgan, and Wood.

In naming these and other examples with commendation, let it not be imagined that we advise any to copy them. To this, there are weighty objections. Toward the sculptor or the architect who conceived the beautiful design, such a course is meanly piratical. It invades also the rights of the proprietor, who

has paid liberally that he might have some thing peculiar and unique.

A copy made by common workmen (and no others will attempt the wrong) is rarely successful. Often it is only a caricature. To copy is slavish, as well as mean. It discourages originality, and creates that monotony which is a positive vice in the province of taste. If you see a design which you like, apply to the artist who produced it. If he deserve the name, he will give you, not a repetition of his own idea, but another conception, perhaps a happier one. Surely this is far more honorable than the course of those who employ mere artisans to steal the property of genius.

There are several structures in Green-wood, which must be classed among its tombs, although wholly above the surface. Here may be seen Egyptian, Grecian, Gothic architecture. Some of them are large, elaborate and costly. So far as structures like these are merely ambitious in their character or aspect,

indications of wealth, rather than of sorrow, or of taste, we cannot but regret to see them rising. Such erections can do nothing for art, nothing for sentiment. They teach no high lessons, they awaken no emotions of beauty, of tenderness, or of hope. All surely will acknowledge that the rivalry of wealthy display should never invade the sacred precincts of the grave. The costly offerings which are brought there, like those of Nicodemus and the pious Arimathæan, should excite no envious or emulous desires. Let them be such as reason, and taste, and religion can approve. To this subject reference will again be made.

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### Symbolic Devices.

Symbols, in monumental sculpture, if happily conceived and well executed, are always gratifying. The rareness of success shows the difficulty of the undertaking. On the other

hand, in no department of art, perhaps, is failure so glaring, or so shocking. It is painful to be forced to smile at objects which are designed, and which ought to compose and to elevate our thoughts. Let the man who contemplates such a work, remember that he is about to invite scrutiny, and to challenge criticism. Let it be well considered, lest, peradventure, he record some expensive folly, in a material whose durability would then be its greatest objection. Such a work should call into requisition the choicest talent and the highest skill. Genius and piety should furnish the design; judgment and taste should superintend the task.

On a point of this nature, our suggestions must, of necessity, be general. Not a few derive their symbolism from the ancients. The lachrymatory, the mutilated column, the inverted torch, are very frequent. To be classic is the highest ambition of some. With them, appropriateness and consistency are matters of small importance. Were there no other

objection to the class of objects in question, it would, in my mind, be sufficient, that imitation and repetition are fatal to sentiment, and nullify, if they do not reverse, the intended effect. Let it also be considered that these symbols are pagan, not only in origin, but in purport. They are the mute language of a grief, to which consolation was unknown—the sad hieroglyphics of despair. They say nothing of faith, or hope, or immortality, or heaven. What have Christians to do with such emblems?

One other kind of mortuary memorial asks our attention, and it is the highest of all. I refer to personal representations in the form of statues and reliefs. These may be copies from nature, or ideal forms; they may be human, angelic, or allegorical. They all belong to the province of sculpture, and many of her best triumphs have been won on this field. Would that it were far more common to resort to this mode of adorning the tomb and commemorating the dead.

To those who have the desire and the means of securing these most beautiful and expressive of all memorials, our advice is summed up in a word. Employ the sculptor. The term is sufficiently definite, and certainly does not include all who have learned to chip and hew in stone. Here, as in poetry, to fall short of excellence, is to be nothing, or worse. When commissions in sculpture shall be confined to able and educated artists, we shall, at least, be spared some gross absurdities. Cherubs, with babies in their arms, will no longer be seen in *downward* flight; and marble seraphs will cease to *weep*, and *break their harps*, because a mortal has exchanged the woes of earth for heavenly bliss.

There is, however, a difficulty connected with the employment of sculpture for sepulchral purposes. Statuary marble is ill fitted for exposure to the severities of our climate. It seems little less than cruel, to subject its snowy whiteness and chiseled delicacy to the rude assaults of storm and frost. The occa-

sional humidity of our atmosphere, so favorable to the growth of lichens; its liability to frequent and extreme changes of temperature; its winds, charged sometimes with dust, and sometimes with emanations from shrubs and trees, alike pernicious whether in bloom or decay; these constitute a series of deforming influences, which the hardest and finest marble cannot long resist. Statues thus exposed are so rare among us, that these effects have not been often witnessed. But they are inevitable, as thousands of examples prove in other countries, which resemble ours in climate, where many a chiseled Apollo and Adonis have come to look little better than chimney-sweeps.

But the difficulty is not insurmountable. Carrara marble is not the only material for statuary. We believe that our best sandstones will yet, to some extent, be used for this purpose. Some of them are very light colored, and withal so compact and fine, that they may be wrought with almost the same

sharpness and delicacy as marble itself. Let them be tried. They would, at least, have a hardier aspect, and even the stains of weather and time would more become them.

Or, better still, employ *bronze*. It is adapted equally to statues and reliefs. It heeds not the weather; it *almost* defies the touch of carelessness and malice. To its imperishable shapes you may entrust the form and features which you would fain embalm, or the symbolic story of love and faith, and send them down to ages far remote.

In this respect, happily, we are no longer dependent on Paris or Munich. We have, at length, among ourselves, the artists, the means, and the material. Green-wood itself, will soon possess specimens of monumental bronze, of which we may, as Americans, be proud.

But we need not forego the marble: only let the creations of the artists in that beautiful material be protected. For a purpose so worthy, we would gladly see the little temple go up. Let the lifeless body moulder beneath.



In the room above, let us behold the sculptured form standing life-like, or reposing as did the original in the first sleep of death. Or there let the angel of the resurrection stand, and remind each beholder of that great day when all the sleepers of the grave will wake. Here, too, might the sister art of painting find an appropriate place, while imparting beauty and solemn meaning to the frescoed wall. Against the action of the elements, and of rude hands, all this might be fully defended by means of glass, and yet be seen by every visitor.

We would intercede with those who can afford to mourn expensively; who build costly mausoleums, or rear the tall, and florid, and meaningless column. The heap of masonry, which tells of nothing but pride; the ill-shapen and flower-incumbered pillar, which looks so tawdry, may indicate a poverty of mind and taste quite as much as they evince pecuniary ability. We regret to see money thus worse than wasted. The structures re-

ferred to, however elaborate in finish, or architectural in their form, make, as objects of sight, scarcely any impression. They are in fact mere imitations — large-sized models — and we give to them the same passing glance of indifference, that we should bestow on a handsome Grecian dog-kennel, or Gothic bird-house.

But how different the case, were the interior of such structures made receptacles of works in the highest line of art. Have we not painters and sculptors blessed with nature's own inspiration, and laboriously trained in the best schools of the world? Shall they languish, and only the stone-hewer flourish? Why not enlist in your service that rare and glorious skill? Why not spread before all, a banquet for the eye, and mind, and heart? Thus may you have the privilege of speaking in beauty and power to the present and the future. Thus may you associate your own names with the patronage and the immortal life of genius.

I cannot leave this topic without allusion to another mode in which it is hoped that sculpture will yet find a safe home in the shades of Green-wood. The idea of a large building, erected for this purpose, and specially adapted to it, has, from the first, been cherished by the founders of the institution. An object so desirable will not, we trust, be long delayed. A structure, such as this ought to be, would add ornament and dignity even to those delightful grounds. In every season, and in all weathers, it would furnish a sheltered and comfortable walk. And, best of all, here the pencil and the chisel might contend in friendly rivalry, and both would bid us bless an

“Art that can immortalize.”

In view of what has been accomplished in GREEN-WOOD, it is not presumptuous to hope, that we shall yet behold on one of its fair eminences, a commanding and spacious edifice, with chapel, and halls, and corridors, and arcades, not unworthy of comparison with the

as yet unmatched cemetery of the Certosa in the environs of Bologna. It asks no stretch of fancy to imagine the inviting and instructive spectacle, which a place like this must, in the course of time, exhibit.

For monumental purposes, apart from sculpture, the materials in general use are marble, granite, sandstone. Of these, the first-named seems to be, on the whole, the most popular. This is not strange. It is brilliant and showy. It contrasts strongly with the dark ground, and with surrounding verdure. It is easily wrought. Its blackened inscriptions are so plain, that "he who runs may read." Finally, it asserts something like a prescriptive claim to such employment from usage immemorial.

These qualifications will always commend it — especially to that large class who care mainly for present appearance and immediate effects. But there are some who look farther. They have noticed that marble is injuriously affected by moisture and cold. That it is liable to crack, and even exfoliate. That it soon be-

comes stained, and in that state looks dirty and bedaggled. That inscriptions on this substance, to be read with ease, must be blackened, and that the pigment soon washes out, rarely to be renewed. They have remarked, especially in the case of our own limestones, that lichens find on them a congenial soil, and often require but a few years to make all lettering illegible. This is a serious objection, and all the more, as no "Old Mortality" can now be looked for, with pious mallet and chisel, to keep fresh the tomb-stone memory of modern saints. Finally, in burying-grounds filled with marble monuments, their eyes have soon grown weary of the monotonous whiteness, or have been pained by its glare.

With some, *granite* is the favorite. It is certainly hard; it is believed to be durable. It has a stern, cold look. It is well adapted to a particular style of monument, perhaps, also, of men. It shows best in massive structures, and in simple forms. Of ornament, it is almost wholly incapable.

*Sienite* is a kindred rock, and, in some respects, more suited to monumental purposes. There are in Green-wood several obelisks of the dark Staten Island stone. They are finely cut, and highly polished, and look strong, and dignified, and indestructible.

The fine, compact *sandstone* claims, on the whole, our preference. The light-brown freestones of New-Jersey, Virginia, &c., are now well known and much employed. For monumental uses they are admirably fitted. Allusion has already been made to the ease and delicacy with which this material can be worked. Its good looks are not fleeting. Even its stains are not unbecoming. If any doubt its superior duration and fitness for the purpose now in question, let them examine and compare the headstones and tablets in St. Paul's and Trinity church-yards. Let them note the difference (especially in the inscriptions) between the marble of thirty years' exposure, and the sandstone which has been there five times as long. With the issue of

such a comparison, we would readily leave the decision.

When stratified rocks are used in building, each piece should invariably be laid on its plane of lamination. If the strata are set on their edges, they are liable to slough off, in consequence of the interpenetration and expansion of water. In monuments of moderate size, vertical joints should be avoided. Let each stone, if possible, reach quite across. Use only the best of water-proof cement. Be sure that the bed of concrete on which the structure rests, extends below the upheavings of frost, and the undermining labors of the grave-digger. These precautions are not idle. If disregarded, the monument, which you have reared to transmit your memory, may decline, or fall even sooner than yourself.

The rise and progress of Green-wood Cemetery has been watched with deep interest by not a few. We have had the satisfaction of seeing it steadily advance in substantial prosperity and public regard. A vast expenditure

in improvements and monuments, has given it importance as mere property. Twenty-five thousand kindred bodies now sleeping there, have bound it to our affections, and have impressed on it a value which no arithmetic can estimate. We respect the public spirit and disinterested motives which led to its formation, and which have continued, with equal taste and judgment, to direct its affairs. We have seen it attain a rank inferior in no respect to others; and in some particulars, far surpassing every similar institution in the Old World and the New. We feel an honest pride in its fair fame. We are jealous for Greenwood. Should a lavish and senseless display become general—should violations of propriety in the design, the execution, or the inscription of monuments be frequent—should an idle rage for planting convert those sunny glades into gloomy thickets; in a word, should Taste, and Beauty, and Intelligence, cease to reign there, Green-wood would lose its best, if not its only charm. If Fashion and Ambi-



tion are to invade this home of the dead, it may yet become as vulgar and heartless a place as the living city itself.

A careful walk through the grounds, will show that we are not without reason for apprehension. The more recent monuments seem to evince a growing tendency to mere show. There is a superabundance of ornament. The beauty of form—the grace that may be expressed in mere lines—the impressive effect of a massive simplicity, are not appreciated as they deserve to be. The headstone covered with marble roses, the pillar stuck all over with wreaths and emblems, demand and receive the same admiration as we bestow on her, who endeavors to compensate for want of beauty, by overlaying her person with jewelry, and lace, and flowers, and flounces.

Of sculpture, or what was meant for it, we have many unfortunate specimens. To this evil, and its proper remedy, I have already alluded. In most cases, probably, those who

have set up these monstrosities for public inspection, are to be regarded as victims, rather than as offenders. May others be saved from like impositions. Surely, he who can spend hundreds or thousands of dollars on a monument, might afford to pay some skillful artist for a chaste design; some man of letters for a decent epitaph; and some schoolboy, to see that it is not misspelt on the stone.

A monument on one of the avenues of Greenwood is yearly seen by many thousand persons. The ill-conceived emblem — the ill-executed sculpture — the ungrammatical inscription, and the unpoetical lines, are inevitably subjected to criticism. Were it not well to consider this — ye, who are about to build in stone, and to write your names where they will be read when *you* shall be no more?

I must say a reluctant word in regard to another class of memorials. I refer to the glazed niches, the glass show cases, filled with small images, with artificial flowers, and sometimes with playthings. We understand and

appreciate the feeling which dictates these exhibitions. We reverence a mother's grief. We can look, but with pity, even on its excess.

Weep, afflicted parent, but spread not out thy sorrows before a hard, cold world. Look, sometimes, if thou canst bear it, on those touching mementoes of childish pleasures and endearments, but let them remain in their own little cabinet. The grave is no place for toys, and as to the artificial flowers, they belong to Canal-street.

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### Epitaphs.

Eight years ago we wrote a plea for monumental inscriptions. It was first printed, and may still be found in the Comptroller's annual pamphlet. From various causes, some of which are there suggested, epitaphs had gone greatly out of use. They had become unfashionable. A wish was expressed for the

revival of a custom so old and so rational. It was hoped that in Green-wood, then just starting—we might be allowed to read with quickened sensibilities, the modest, tender, and pious inscription,—and that there the “ Muse,” whether learned or ‘unlettered,’ might strew the holy texts, which alone can teach us how to die.

The wish and the hope have not been disappointed. There are many neat and beautiful epitaphs in Green-wood. But with the good, as usual, has come also the evil. Though we never expected perfection, we did not anticipate quite so large a measure of the opposite extreme. Surely, in an age and land of vaunted refinement and general education, our tomb-stone literature ought to be free from gross violations of syntax and orthography.

An inscription for the dead should be simple in style, sparing of words, modest in eulogy. The long and labored epitaph is seldom read. Glowing encomiums are received with distrust. Excessive praise — fulsome always — seems

especially so, when heaped on the dead. These are principles generally acknowledged — though, in practice, so often disregarded. Indeed, we have seen specimens of epitaphian laudation, which indicated that their authors had resolved into an affirmative, the intense negation of the poet :

‘Can Honor’s voice provoke the silent dust,  
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of death?’

There is in Green-wood a class of inscriptions — getting now to be very common — which, at first thought, may seem to violate no rule of propriety. “Father:” “Mother:” “Dear Johnny:” “Our sweet Emmie:” and “Our little Bobby;” — when first seen, seem very simple and tender; — the unstudied utterance of filial or parental grief, which could vent itself only in passionate exclamation. But not so, when the once solitary specimen has become the fashion, and stares at us with every turn. The expediency of such expressions on the tomb-stone, under any circum-

stances, may well be questioned. While the heart of our friend is yet bleeding under some recent bereavement, we listen sympathisingly even to his extravagance of sorrow or of praise. But sooner or later the time comes, when such language is heard no longer; or when, if uttered, it only grieves and offends the ear of Friendship. Surely that which may not be spoken occasionally in the ear, ought not to be obtruded unceasingly on the eye. Terms of fond endearment (if ever proper) should be reserved for the sacredness of domestic privacy. When forced upon the indifferent by-stander, they are always disgusting; and equally so, whether lavished on the living or the dead. Fond mourner—confine your passionate utterances to the friendly bosoms that share your grief; or, still better, breathe them only in your secret sighs.



